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SUBJECT: MONITORING AND EVALUATION: THE COMPLEX EMERGENCIES  
DATABASE

¶1. (U) PRM Policy Team Leader and USEU RefAssistant visited the Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) at the University of Louvain in Brussels on March 21 to monitor the continued development and global expansion of the Complex Emergencies Database (CE-DAT) to provide key nutritional, health and mortality indicators for all populations affected by conflicts and other complex emergencies (Agreement SPRMC06GR067). At roughly the project's mid-point, the monitoring visit found that CRED has made significant progress toward meeting agreed objectives and indicators, demonstrating strong performance on activities that are key to the Department's ability to assess humanitarian impact.

¶2. (U) PRM Policy Team Leader and USEU RefAssistant discussed the CE-DAT project with CRED's Director, Debarati Guha Sapis, as well as research fellows Olivier Degomme and Chiara Altare. Other CRED staff, including Information Technology programmer Alexander Diaz, as well as Khassoum Diallo and Sakura Atsumi of UNHCR's Field Information and Coordination Support Section joined an informal luncheon.

¶3. (U) CRED demonstrated significant progress ) already meeting or exceeding some targets ) toward the first objective of the CE-DAT project: To increase the quantity of CE-DAT data available to the international humanitarian community.

Indicator 1.1: An increase of at least 50% from the current number of survey data points included in CE-DAT.

Results to date: The target of 9,750 records has already been exceeded. As of March 19, CE-DAT included 11,369 data points from 1,625 surveys. CRED staff attributed this success to their strong collaboration with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Indicator 1.2: Geo-reference data provided for at least 70% of survey records.

Results to date: Geo-referencing has become standard for all data (100%) in CE-DAT; CRED staff demonstrated how data is referenced to various administrative divisions within countries (e.g., provinces, districts, cities, camps). However, CRED continues to grapple with a common problem in geo-referencing: how to reflect changes in administrative divisions that occur in countries undergoing or emerging from conflict, such as Afghanistan and Sudan.

Indicator 1.3: At least one contextual information item included for every new record.

Results to date: Progress is needed on this indicator. Although lots of contextual information is available in the surveys collected, CRED has found it difficult to include this data in CE-DAT in a standardized way. CRED plans to seek solutions to this challenge during a meeting of its

experts, working group in April.

Indicator 1.4: 100% of new CE-DAT entries archived at Recipient,s office in paper or electronic format.

Results to date: 100% of new CE-DAT entries have been archived in paper format, including those that have been received electronically. CRED,s policy is to archive all entries @nd electronic format (three). CRED staff recognil previous years of the some entries were arc@s, which may have change The project is on track tctive: To improve thed data in CE-DAT.

Ind Emergencies Data Network at least five memorandaed.

Results to date: Cd`paQso collaborating closely and in the process of negotiating MOUs with GOAL, MSF-Belgium, MSF-Holand, and Action Contre la Faim. While CRED as pursued MOUs for the purpose of long-term Qnstitutional commitment to data sharing, it has found that the existence of an MOU carries ittle implication for the amount of data receQved from an NGO. Some NGOs have provided sigificant amounts of data while hesitating to sign an MOU for reasons of "independence." CRED,s ongoing collaboration with UNHCR was evidenced by UNHCR staff,s presence during our visit.

Indicator 2.2: Guidelines for reporting data designed and distributed to all members of CEDN.

Results to date: Guidelines for reporting have not been developed, but will be discussed at the expert working group meeting in April.

Indicator 2.3: Promptness of data availability increase with a turnaround for data inquiries of 24 hours minimum and 15 days maximum.

Results to date: Anecdotal evidence suggests that turnaround for data-inquiries has been prompt; however, CE-DAT has no mechanism to measure the amount of time between the request for analysis and the response. CRED has recently added a tool to track the time it takes to provide the data requested.

Indicator 2.4: Two technical and advisory meetings with partners organized at project,s mid-point and at end of project period.

Results to date: The first CE-DAT Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting occurred in London in November 2006. The second TAG meeting is planned for July 2007.

15. (U) The project has made some progress toward its third objective: To develop decision support products and tools. However, further efforts will be needed to achieve targets in this area.

Indicator 3.1: Partner capacities improved through Recipient,s participation in at least eight discussions and four technical meetings.

Results to date: CRED has participated in several technical discussions with partners, and has formed an Expert Working Group to address technical issues and improve partner capacities. For example, CRED met with Action Against Hunger-UK to discuss its Hunger Watch initiative. The Expert Working Group will meet in April 2007. CRED is in the process of redeveloping the CE-DAT website to add a new function and applications devoted to the CEDN that would include discussion groups.

Indicator 3.2: At least six reports or briefs prepared and disseminated.

Results to date: CRED produced and disseminated a report on The Democratic Republic of the Congo: A brief analysis of anthropometric surveys from 2000-2006. It disseminated on March 26 the first CE-DAT newsletter, which provided a useful

analysis of data from Afghanistan, and identified complex emergencies where data is lacking. CRED has prepared three briefs for PRM: 1) an update on crude mortality and global acute malnutrition rates that exceed emergency thresholds; 2) a short primer on CMR and GAM for a non-technical audience; and 3) a brief analysis of available data for Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. CRED is currently preparing a brief on Iraq at the request of the UN,s Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Indicator 3.3: A report on baselines, thresholds and reference values prepared and disseminated to the CEDN.

Results to date: The project has produced a preliminary analysis of baseline data on mortality rates for children under five in several countries.

Indicator 3.4: Four risk maps created and made available on the CE-DAT website.

Results to date: Risk maps are not yet available. As part of the redesign of the CE-DAT website, CRED plans to create risk maps by linking data possibly via Google Earth. This capability is under development.

16. (U) Overall, the CE-DAT project has made significant progress toward its objectives. For the remainder of the project period, providing tools and resources for the CEDN ) such as guidelines for reporting, technical meetings and discussion groups ) should be a major area of focus for the CRED team. The redesign of the CE-DAT website will also be critical to achieving the project,s objectives, particularly through online discussion groups and the creation of risk maps. PRM Policy Team Leader pressed CRED to continue to reach out to humanitarian partners on data sharing, especially to increase its engagement with the International Committee of the Red Cross. PRM also would like to see greater collaboration between CRED and the UN,s Standing Committee on Nutrition. CRED has effectively managed staff turnover in its small team, including restoring electronic files lost by the abrupt departure of its previous Information Technology program officer. Communication between CRED staff and PRM remains excellent.

17. (U) The CE-DAT project remains essential to the Department,s ability to track and report on core indicators of humanitarian assistance, as laid out in PRM,s FY08 Bureau Performance Plan, the Department,s Performance Accountability Report, and the new State-USAID framework of foreign assistance. It is also a key tool in the Office of Management and Budget,s 2007 Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review of PRM,s assistance to refugees. While refugee health is the most immediate cross-cutting policy goal that it addresses, CE-DAT serves a broader function of building the international humanitarian community,s capacity to use reliable, timely evidence in decisions about intervention policies, program design and resource allocation.

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